

Doctor Joseph Parritt House  
County Road Number 45 (Beverwyck Road)  
Troy, Parsippany-Troy Hills Township  
Morris County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-562

HABS  
NJ  
14-TROHI  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

HABS  
N.J.  
14-TROY  
1-

Doctor Joseph Parritt House  
County Road Number 45 (Beverwyck Road)  
Troy, Parsippany-Troy Hills Township  
Morris County, New Jersey

Owners: Mr. and Mrs. William E. Baldwin

Date of Erection: Central unit 1788-1801; two  
lateral units 1833

Architect:

Builder: Dr. Joseph Parritt (d. 1801), and  
Hiram Smith Jr. (d. 1865)

Present Condition: As built in different periods and  
well preserved

Number of Stories: Two and one-half, and cellar

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone masonry

Exterior walls - timber  
frame, clapboard and flush  
siding

Interior walls - lath and  
plaster on studding

Chimneys - brick, built  
inside of one gable end of  
central unit, and in center  
of lateral wings

Roof - gambrel, wood shingled,  
on central unit and one wing;  
low pitched gable, tin  
covered on other wing

Historical Data:

Samuel Parritt whose will was proved in Morris  
County in 1795 resided below the present village of Troy

in that part of Hanover Township which has since been set off as Parsippany-Troy Hills Township. His wife Eleanor brought him 200 acres (adjacent to his own tract of equal acreage on the lower bank of Parsippany Creek at what has become the village of Troy) by inheritance from her father, Joseph Alling. She and her father were both deceased by 26 May 1788 in which date this Samuel Parritt by Deed of Gift conveyed all 400 acres and an 87 acre woodlot "at a place called Parsippany" to his sons Joseph and Archibald Parritt. On 3 June following, in confirmation thereof, three of his daughters, Anna wife of John Cobb, Eleanor wife of Hiram Smith, and Elizabeth wife of Henry Howell, gave a deed of quit claim to their brother the said Joseph Parritt, for their shares in the estate of their late mother Eleanor Alling Parritt. The larger tract is described as "being the whole of the lands adjoining to and called the homestead". A fourth daughter, Charity Parritt, retained her one-eighth interest in that estate, however, and apparently the other son, Archibald Parritt, who died intestate in 1795, transferred his share of his parents' estate to his brother Joseph abovenamed.

This Joseph Parritt having thus come into possession of the estate died intestate in 1801, evidently without issue. On 1st August of that year, the "Plantation called the homestead of Doctor Joseph Parritt deceased containing about five hundred acres", a lot of 10 acres nearby called the Mulford Tract, a one acre lot in the village of Troy, and the 87 acre woodlot in Parsippany, were divided into equal parts among the four surviving heirs of Samuel and Eleanor (Alling) Parritt abovesaid, a map of which was recorded in Book L, page 1 of Morris County Deeds on 28 June 1804.

In this division, the one-fourth part awarded to Ann Parritt wife of John Cobb, Esq., was principally a tract of 89.42 acres described as extending along the southern line of her father's homestead farm, and which her late brother Dr. Joseph Parritt had added to that estate by purchase from Lucas Van Beverheut. On that lot the house here considered was erected.

On 22 December 1809, Henry Cobb of Hanover Township and Maria his wife, gave a deed to John J. Cobb of the same place, quitclaiming to him 29.54 acres, "part of the real estate of which John Cobb Esquire died possessed," describing the tract as beginning at the north abutment of the bridge over the mill pond in Troy, extending some 354 feet along the road to Parsippany, thence southwest some 732 feet along the land of Henry Cobb, thence southeast 842 feet along that of Squier Tomkins to the road to Troy (which here crossed this lot in a northeasterly direction in passing the house here considered), thence southeast some 1530 feet along the land of Samuel Smith, thence northeast 91 feet along John Howell's line to the road from Troy to Lawrence Lewis (and further southeast to Hanover Neck at present), thence along this road northwesterly to the road to Troy mentioned above, thence some 300 feet to the middle of Parsippany Brook and down the same to the bridge. The tract was thus cut from three adjacent tracts of the Dr. Joseph Parritt estate as divided in 1801 and awarded to his sisters, Ann Cobb, Eleanor Smith, and Charity Parritt.

John J. Cobb abovesaid with his wife Jane, of Hanover Township, apparently occupying the house here considered, gave a deed of 18 June 1819 conveying the same 29.65 acres to Calvin Cook of the same place, who in turn conveyed it by one of 7 March 1831 to Lewis E. Davenport, also of Hanover. The last named, with wife Susan H. passed it to Hiram Smith Jr. of the same place, the upper part of this tract, being the  $10\frac{1}{2}$  acres on which the house stands on the northwest side of the road, by their deed of 11 February 1833. He was a nephew of the Dr. Joseph Parritt named above as first owner of the house.

This Hiram Smith Jr., by his will proved 24 November 1865 devised a lifetime use of the estate to his wife Mary A. Smith and afterwards one-eighth thereof to his son William H. H. Smith and seven-eighths to his son Richard Smith. Beer's Atlas of Morris County 1868, in the map of the village of Troy on plate 14 shows this house marked "Est. of H. Smith".

The last named died 30 July 1891 having devised this homestead in Troy, containing about 200 acres, to his wife during her lifetime and afterwards to his children, Emily C. Smith and Marjorie S. wife of William E. Baldwin. Robinson's Atlas of Morris County, 1887, shows the house as that of "R. Smith" in its map of Troy village, and it corresponds to that in Beer's of 1868 abovesaid.

On 8 November 1909 George B. Smith, surviving executor of Richard Smith's estate, as empowered in the Will, sold the homestead in Troy, Hanover Township, to one of the daughters, Emily C. Smith then of Detroit, Michigan, including thirteen tracts in Hanover Township, Morris County, New Jersey. By deed of the day following, this grantee conveyed a half interest in the same to her sister Marjorie S. Baldwin of Summit, New Jersey, who with William E. Baldwin Her husband are the present owners. The part of Hanover Township in which stands this homestead originally of Dr. Joseph Parritt has since been set off as the township of Parsippany-Troy Hills. It may be noticed that this homestead has been in possession of one family for at least 150 years to the present time.

#### Architectural Analysis:

As indicated by its floor plan of a front and a rear chamber on one side of an entrance stair-hall and confirmed by the details of woodwork trim, the erection of the central unit of this three part mansion can be assigned to the late 18th century. This plan, which had become standard for the better class of residences then and continued in favor for several decades, required a service and dining room wing at one gable end. A more elaborate house of that date would have provided two more rooms in symmetry on the other side of the hall with resulting imposing facade of central entrance flanked by two windows on each side of it.

In the present case, however, the lesser wing built with the center unit (as indicated by their common cellar undivided by masonry wall) has been remodelled at the time when the balancing third unit was added at the opposite end of the main house. In both of those flanking wings, the details and design of window trim and of mantels are those common to the Greek Revival period which must have affected building in this region about 1830 et seq. Accordingly this alteration and addition is ascribed to Hiram Smith Jr. who took title to the place in 1833. Originally, the service wing just mentioned was allowed an unusual basement kitchen by the fall in the rear grade, a fireplace and so-called Dutch oven still remaining there unused since the remodelling of 1833.

Incidentally, it is stated by the present owner that the door from the side porch to the small inside vestibule in the first floor of this wing was reset there from its original location in the front wall of room number 1, and that it then entered a corridor since thrown into that room. The heavy gambrel roof to this wing is perhaps unfortunate in juxtaposition to the one of too similar size on the center unit, the low tin roofed gable of the third unit being more successful in setting off the mass of the main house. The movable slat shutters to all the windows being more modern, they have not been shown on the drawings. Likewise, the sash in the upper front windows are shown with the original twelve panes in harmony with the remaining ones of the first floor windows instead of the modern glass undivided by muntins which has replaced the former.

#### Bibliography:

A search of title by Cornelius McPhillips, H.A.B.S. abstractor, in Morris County court records

*Leuris D. Cook*  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

*Seymour W. Williams*  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.  
District Officer

(17)